

# HARDEE COUNTY

## ANNUAL REPORT

2006-2007



**Slow but steady wins the race!**



# County Commissioners

Minor L. Bryant, Vice-Chairman  
District I

Clifton N. Timmerman  
District II

Gordon R. Norris  
District III

Bobby R. Smith, Chairman  
District IV

Dale A. Johnson  
District V

Lex Albritton  
County Manager



Ken Evers  
County Attorney

Annual Report prepared by the Office  
of Management and Budget

Janice Williamson, Director of Finance  
Aimee Smith, Budget Specialist

# MESSAGES FROM THE



"I have enjoyed the progress Hardee County has made in 2007 and proud to be a part of it. I look forward to 2008 with great expectation of some smart growth and sound economic stability in spite of the Legislature."

-Minor Bryant, District I

"We seem to be on the edge of a boom in growth in Hardee County. Your County Commission is committed to make sure this is done in a well-planned and orderly fashion. I think well paying jobs is one of our top priorities to ensure that people can afford the new homes that are being built. I look forward to serving the citizens of Hardee County."

-Dr. Nick Timmerman, District II



"A new year brings new challenges. As Tallahassee changes the tax structure of our State, we will continue our balancing act for the foreseeable future. To move forward in our County, we must be innovative, prepared and determined to preserve our way of life. "

-Gordon Norris, District III

# COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

"I said last year that 2007 would be even more challenging, but I didn't know how true that would really be. Our county has been handed some really serious financial difficulties; however, we are ready and willing to meet these challenges. We are currently facing the issues and moving ahead. Hardee County will remain a great place to live and play. I promise!"

-Dale Johnson, District V



"Hardee County continues to experience potential growth in both commercial and residential development. Economic development remains an issue of vital importance as well as the infrastructure required to support both economic and residential growth. The completion of four-laning Highway 17 has been and will continue to be of the utmost importance for the future of our County. We must strive to provide the leadership, services, and infrastructure to maintain the health, welfare, and safety of our community."

-Bobby Smith, District IV



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER



Dear Fellow Citizens:

We are pleased to present the 2007 Hardee County Annual Report. We hope this report is informative and provides you with information on what Hardee County has accomplished over the past year.

In June, the Governor signed Legislation that provided the largest tax cut in Florida history. As a small county with a limited budget; this was extremely difficult for us. We complied and reduced your tax rates to the previous year's level plus an additional three percent. The resulting reduction in our budget under the new legislation versus what it would have been was a reduction of approximately two million dollars. To accomplish this, all departments under the Board of County Commissioners were instructed to cut all capital expenditures including replacement of old equipment; the only projects to remain in the budget were those funded by program dollars. The County's work force was reduced by 17 positions and there were no pay increases for merit or cost of living budgeted. As County Manager, I applaud the efforts of staff that have had to deal with this task, but at the same time I note that such actions as ignoring equipment replacements will cripple our ability to continue to provide adequate levels of service in the future. Also, continued inability to provide adequate compensation for personnel will result in diminished ability to attract and retain a qualified workforce.

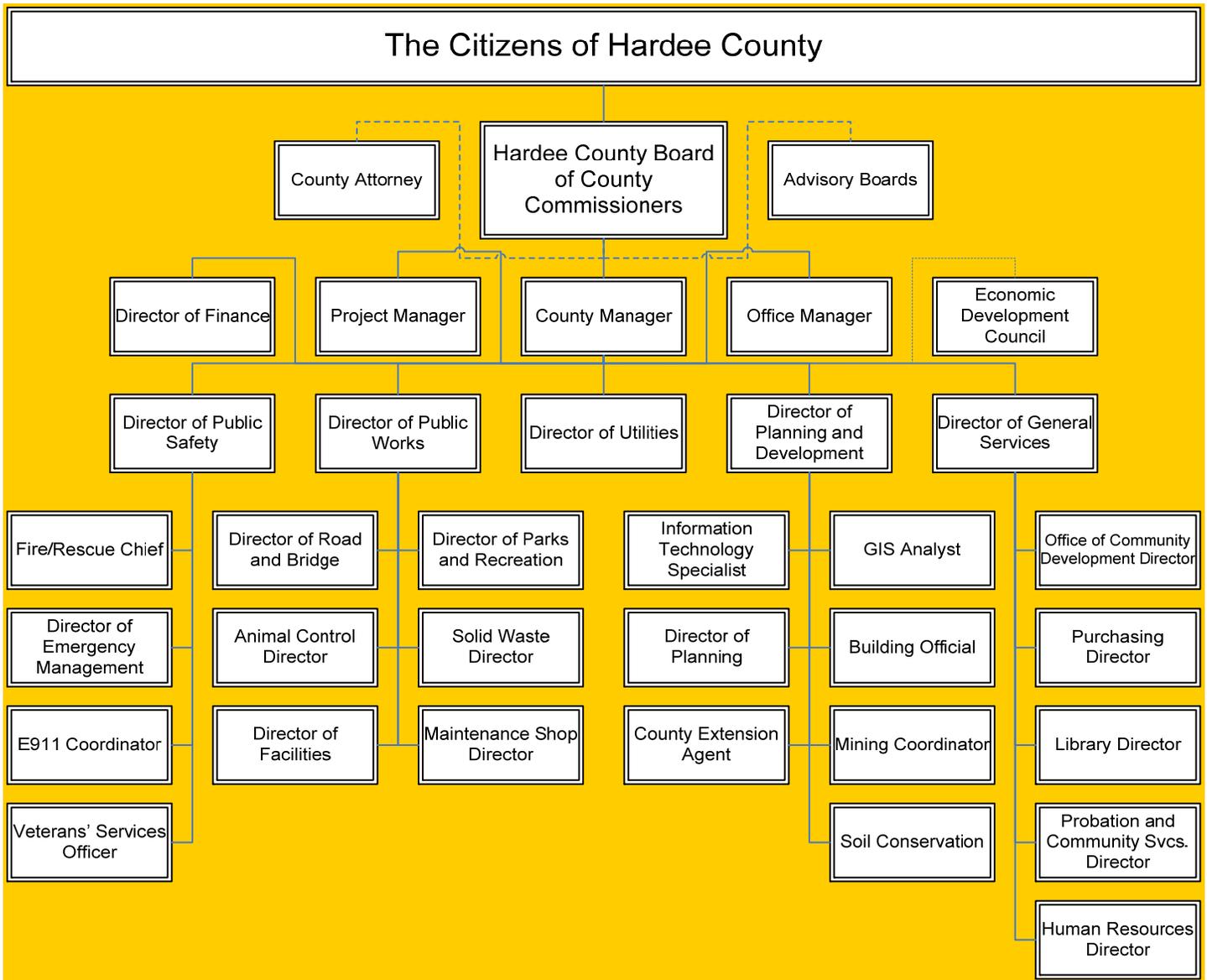
As we continue to serve the needs of the community, we are also continuing to provide the infrastructure to encourage economic development. Even though there continues to be much talk concerning growth and specific land use changes in both the areas of industry and residential development, it has not, at this point occurred. Previously much of the delay was due to the lack of water and wastewater capacity. This is still true, but we can now add the slowdown in the economy as a whole to this scenario. But with implementation of additional water and wastewater in the next year, we will have provided the needed capacity to support the planned growth. To finance these services the county was successful this year in obtaining from the State of Florida additional appropriations of more than \$2.4 million for our expansion of the Wauchula Hills Wastewater plant.

The staff of Hardee County promises to continue to strive to increase our efficiency in the delivery of County services to both our individual and business citizens. I would like to extend my thanks to all the staff that have worked so faithfully for Hardee County. I also would like to thank the Board of County Commissioners for the tough decisions they have had to make to move our County forward and to better position us for future growth.

Sincerely,

*Lexton H. Albritton Jr.*

# HARDEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

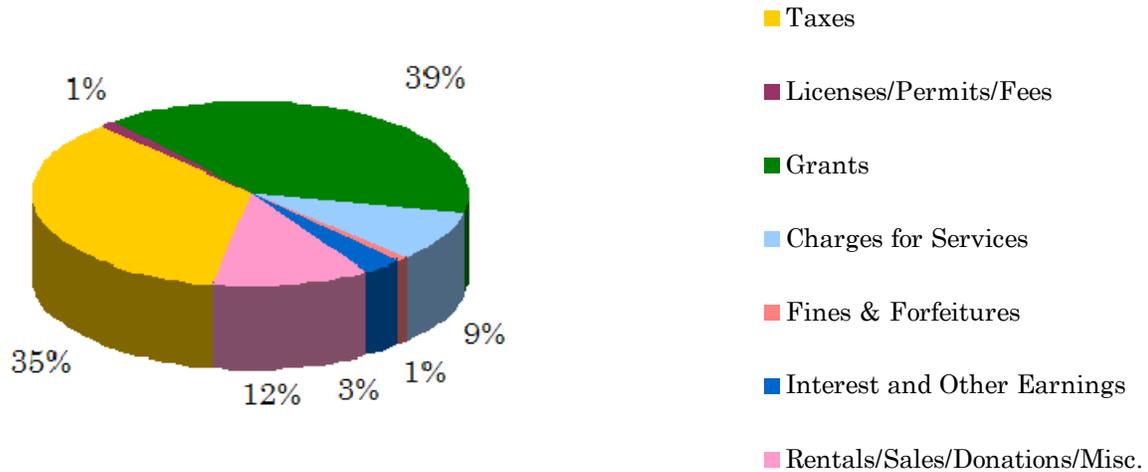


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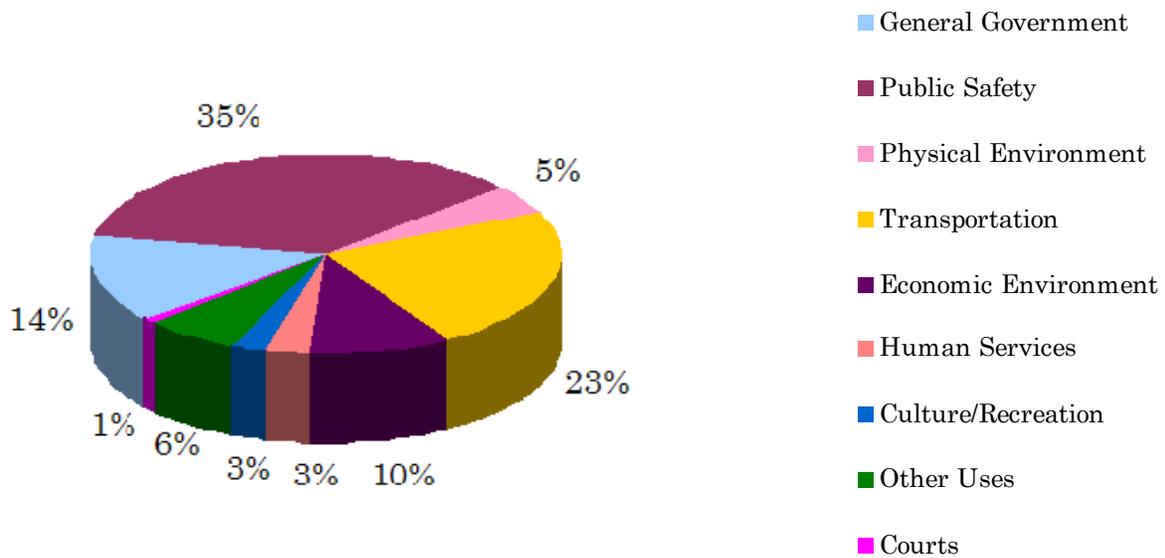
2006-2007

## THE 2006-2007 BUDGET

### County Revenues



### County Expenditures



# SPECIAL PROFILE

## Employee of the Year: J.R. Prestridge



J.R. began employment with Hardee County on Feb. 26, 1973 as an Operator at \$3.85 an hour (Wow!). By January of 1979, he was promoted to Highway Maintenance Supervisor. He spent five years in this position before being promoted to Solid Waste Superintendent in May of 1986. From 1993 to 1999 he acted as the Solid Waste Superintendent/Assistant County Manager, transferred back to R/B as the R/B Superintendent on May 10, 1999 and was promoted to Public Works Director on Feb 25, 2002. His 34 years of service to Hardee County have not only made him a friend, but a valuable source of knowledge as well.

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## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

### HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Department ensures that employment practices and benefits of Hardee County's employees are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Board. They provide support and guidance to all County Departments to ensure the employees of the County are treated with fairness and have safe working environments. HR consists of three full time positions that spend countless hours ensuring payroll is completed bi-weekly, labor issues are addressed and properly handled, as well as all types of insurance claims.



The Human Resources Department manages the benefits, payroll, workers compensation, and personnel files for all of Hardee County's 207 employees !

Accomplishments include:

- Conducted 84 interviews
- Hired 31 new employees
- Conducted 26 payrolls for BOCC Staff
- Implemented program for on-line payroll
- Implemented new vision plan for County Employees
- Maintained personnel records for BOCC employees
- Investigated and filed 23 worker's comp claims

# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Purchasing Department is staffed by the Purchasing Director, a Senior Buyer, a Stores Manager, a Purchasing Specialist and an Administrative Assistant, with a combined total of more than 60 years of public procurement experience. This department provides procurement services to the entire County, constantly striving to obtain the best value for the taxpayer's dollars.

- Investigated and filed 15 liability claims
- Negotiated F/R and Laborer's Union Contracts
- Revised Hardee County Rules and Regulations
- Conducted 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Fair
- Provided guidance to managerial employees on labor issues to ensure equal and fair treatment
- Provide assistance to County employees on labor employment issues and updates

## PURCHASING

One of the Purchasing Department's primary functions is to ensure that contracts for materials and services in excess of \$25,000 are awarded fairly, through the formal sealed bid process. During the past fiscal year, Purchasing issued 32 formal bids for goods and services. Seven projects were awarded totaling more than \$3,640,000.



Additionally, 25 invitations to bid for annual supplier contracts were issued. The purpose of annual contracts is to lock in a price for the entire year and also to ensure that a supplier is under

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## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

contract in the event of catastrophic circumstances such as hurricanes or other natural disasters.

Due to the uncertainty facing government entities as a result of the Governor's property tax cut initiative, fiscal responsibility came under the microscope this year like never before. Strong efforts were made to reduce spending by limiting purchases to essential items.

As a result of this effort, Purchasing processed less than 3,500 requisitions this year, a 5% reduction from the previous year. Less than 3,000 purchase orders were issued, a decrease of almost 20% from the previous year.

The procurement card system was utilized more this year, with 4,000 purchases made by credit card, an increase of 2% over the previous year.

Purchasing processed less than 5,000 invoices, a reduction of more than 35% from the previous year.

### OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

The OMB is staffed by the OMB Director and three Specialists responsible for Budget, Fixed Assets, and Special



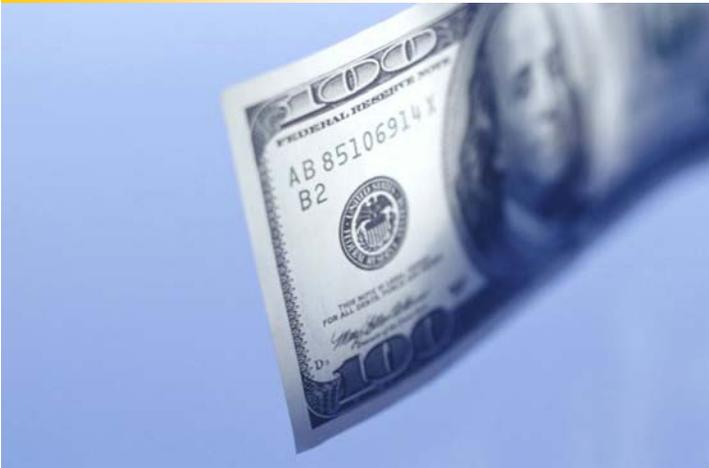
# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Non-ad valorem special assessments are charges for specific benefits or services. It is a “paid for benefit” or “user benefit”. Generally, the County will pass an ordinance levying the non-ad valorem special assessment. Hardee County has special assessments for Fire Control and Solid Waste.

Assessments. This department is the County’s point of contact for all budget issues, including preparation of the County Budget, revenue and expenditure forecasting, monitoring the Board’s debt schedule, monitoring funds, and estimating cash balances. In addition, this department has managed and monitored the FEMA reimbursement from the 2004 Hurricanes, managed and recorded Fixed Assets to comply with GASB requirements and collected interim revenues and improved the tax roll for Special Assessments.

Accomplishments include:

- Processed 335 transfers and 64 budget amendments to meet each departments funding need and maintained a balanced budget
- Processed 87 requests for hardship exemptions, 46 certificates of corrections and 287 pre-determinations for Special Assessments
- Collected \$46,639 in interim billings for Special Assessments
- Succeeded in completing the GASB 34 requirements ahead of scheduled due date
- Completed a new Fixed Assets Policy and Procedure Manual
- Inventoried over \$100 million in



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## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

County's Fixed Assets, including roads and bridges for the first time

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The IT Department supports, maintains, and enhances the County's network infrastructure and information services, and provides related support to all County departments including security to protect the network and data. They further provide geographic analysis support to all agencies and continuously update the County's website.



Accomplishments include:

- Migrating network services to an Active Directory based environment
- GIS project support has been provided to Addressing, Pioneer Park Days, Emergency Management, Economic Development, Engineering, and other County departments
- Upgraded Fire Rescue to a new server system and new software to assist them in meeting their requirements for the upcoming fiscal year
- Replacement of more than 10 computer systems

The IT Department works very closely with other government entities in Hardee County to ensure all systems work together smoothly and efficiently.

# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

## GIS DEPARTMENT

Geographic information system (GIS) technology is a valuable tool for scientific investigations, resource management, asset management, Environmental Impact Assessment, Urban planning, cartography, criminology, history, sales, marketing, and logistics.

During 06/07, the GIS Department updated and began debugging the new “Land Resource Data” website and anticipate it’s release in the Summer of 2008.

The Exchange 2007 Email Server was brought online by the GIS Department this past year. This better serves the county employee’s growing electronic needs.

Through continued use of sub-meter GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment, the GIS Department continues to improve the accuracy of existing maps, and create new map data and digital management systems of drainage inventory (culverts, bridges, etc), fire hydrants, communication towers, landmarks, and other infrastructure.



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## PUBLIC SAFETY

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hardee County Emergency Management is responsible for providing education and outreach to the community and other emergency service providers. Additionally, our department conducts disaster preparedness seminars for all residents. Some important accomplishments included:

- Presented 10 hurricane and disaster preparedness programs throughout the County
- Participated in several home health and safety seminars including Back to School Fair, Community Wellness Fair, Employee Wellness and Benefits Fair, and Science Fair Night at Zolfo Springs, North Wauchula, and Hilltop Elementary Schools
- Held second annual Hazardous Weather Awareness Poster and Essay Contest for K-12 students in Hardee County
- Conducted annual Hurricane Exercise
- Created Pet-Friendly hurricane shelter program

This department also utilized over \$84,000 in Federal and State funded grant awards to upgrade several areas of the Emergency Operation Center including:

The Emergency Operations Center manages two specialized evacuation shelters; one for persons with special medical needs, one for persons with domestic household pets. If you have a need for one of these shelters, contact the Emergency Management Department.



# PUBLIC SAFETY



It takes many different people to organize emergency situations. The Emergency Management staff work closely with several community planning organizations including the Community Traffic Safety Team, Homeless Coalition, Local Mitigation Strategy Committee, and Local Emergency Planning Council to oversee such events.

- Purchase and installation of additional radio equipment
- Installation of Voice Over IP communications system
- Acquired new mobile satellite phone/radio for EM vehicle
- Acquired thermal imager for Special Operations Team
- Installation of video-conferencing system in

## Operation Room

- Provided training and conducted an exercise for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Created Continuity of Operations Plan for Pandemic events
- Conducted full-scale, multi-discipline pandemic exercise
- Provided ICS training for Law Enforcement, Public Works, Fire Rescue, Emergency Management, and Public Health staff
- Completed flood retrofit of residential homes

A number of significant staff events occurred in FY 06-07. Some of those include:

- Addition of Administrative Assistant Position
- All EM Staff completed all ICS required training

## PUBLIC SAFETY

- Director co-presented a program on inland hurricane dangers for the Governor's Hurricane Conference
- Director appointed to Florida Emergency Preparedness Association Board of Directors

### E911

Hardee County E911 Office administers the Hardee County 911 Program in accordance with the state law and the rules governing the program, thus making 911 service universally available and as effective as possible in order to provide immediate citizen access to emergency services, thereby saving time for the caller, and assisting emergency services in their response activities.

The E911 Coordinator is the addressing authority for all addresses within Hardee County and maintains the addressing database.

The E911 Coordinator also worked with the six wireless phone providers in our county to provide successful deployment of Phase II service. Our 911 system is now fully

Enhanced 911 or E911 service is a North American telephone network (NANP) feature of the 911 emergency-calling system that automatically associates a physical address with the calling party's telephone number as required by the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999.

### E911 Quick Statistics for 2006-2007:

Number of 911 calls:  
10,901

Number of new addresses in Hardee County: 148

***Did you know?***  
**Hardee County has 8,315 wire line phones and 18,806 wireless phones**

# PUBLIC SAFETY

## Animal Control Quick Statistics:

Bite reports	42	
Call-outs		10
Complaints	1,245	
Citations issued	133	
Correction notices	20	
Warnings issued	58	
Animals seized		1,203
Animals Adopted	224	
Animals Euthanized	865	

Phase II compliant. This means emergency call takers can receive both the caller's wireless number and their location information. The call is routed to our 911 center either based on the cell site/sector information or on caller location information. Before this Hardee County was at Phase I where only the caller's phone number without their location was received. In an increasingly wireless society, more and more of the mobile public is dialing 911 every day.

E911 received a state grant for \$39,583.48 that allowed us to purchase a Voice Logging Recorder for call taking, maintenance for our 911 equipment, and training costs for the Coordinator and two call takers.

## ANIMAL CONTROL

Hardee County Animal Control is responsible for educating the citizens of the County on their legal responsibilities as pet owners and it promotes the adoptions of stray and unwanted pets.



During this fiscal year Animal Control impounded 1,203 animals. There were 865 animals euthanized, 224 animals adopted and 90 animals redeemed by their owners. The revenue generated from

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

adoptions, donations, impoundment fees, boarding fees, and reimbursements was \$9,985.98.

Animal Control received a grant from Animal Friends for \$15,000 to provide Hardee County residents low cost spaying and neutering of their pets.

Animal Control collaborated with Desoto Animal Services and was able to transfer 13 animals to their shelter.

### FIRE RESCUE SERVICES

The fire and EMS services are combined into one department operating separate budgets for each. Hardee County Fire Rescue was created in 1987 following a merge of the Wauchula Fire Department and Hardee County EMS. The Department was initially staffed with seven firefighters per shift, an operational staff of 21, and call volumes were around 1900 per year. Since that time, there has been a 95% increase in annual call volumes.

During 2006, Fire Rescue responded to 3,653 emergencies. 2,145 of these calls were related to EMS, 472 calls were related to Vehicle Accidents and 1,036 of these were

The Mission Statement of Hardee County Fire Rescue:

Our fire department will bolster its mission by providing fire prevention and safety education to our schools and citizens alike. Our emergency response shall be rapid with the deployment of highly trained, professional firefighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Our department's dedication to the community extends to the mitigation of all emergencies using the most efficient and effective means available.



# PUBLIC SAFETY



related to fire type incidents.

Fire Rescue cannot report on a fiscal year due to state reporting guidelines. However, comparative call volumes as of 10/01/07 equals an average of 6% increase in calls so far for calendar year 2007.

***Did you know?***  
**Nationwide, 106**  
**Firefighters were killed in**  
**the line of duty in 2006.**

One Fire Inspector has facilitated fire prevention practices in all of the Hardee County Schools and daycares. Our Fire Inspector has also visited several of the businesses located within Hardee County to ensure all of the County resident's life safety is being safeguarded. He is also responsible for reading all new construction plans and making on-site inspections to all new construction.

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## PUBLIC WORKS

### TRANSPORTATION

The Road and Bridge Department is the largest department within the County and is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the roads and bridges in our County system. Within the County, there are 310.03 miles of paved roads and 201.58 miles of unpaved roads, as well as 70 bridges. The department handles and issues permits for telephone, culverts, electrical and private utilities, provides signs, ditches and culvert repair and maintenance.

#### Activities and Accomplishments:

- Issued 75 utility permits and 91 culvert permits
- Completed resurfacing of Park Dr., Garden Dr. and Riverside Dr. for \$159,900.86
- Completed resurfacing of Lisa Dr. and Circle for \$88,617.59
- Reviewed numerous site development plans as requested by the Building and Zoning Department
- All work on hurricane damage has been completed
- Coordinated exhibitors, booths, and layout of Pioneer Park Days
- Performed weekly bulk waste pickup
- Supervised weekly trash pickup by community service workers

Hardee County Transportation Department Mission Statement:  
The Road and Bridge Department serves to maintain the County's transportation system of roads and bridges, provide a safe system: to develop and provide high levels of service by planning, scheduling, and controlling work.

The Small County Road Assistance Program, (SCRAP), is



intended to assist small county

# PUBLIC WORKS

governments in resurfacing and reconstructing county roads.

From 2000 until 2010, as much as \$25 million per year from the State Transportation Trust Fund can be used to fund the Small County Road Assistance Program .



## FLEET MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance Shop is responsible for providing safe, dependable equipment to all county departments.

Accomplishments for 06/07 include:

- Staff training from EVT National Training Academy
- Certification in L-1 Law Enforcement Installation
- Certification in F-4 Electrical/E2 Ambulance Electrical
- Acquired a new Shop truck with crane that gives assistance to Facilities Management and Waste Water Department.
- Installed a larger air compressor for Shop
- Maintenance completed on 2,220 work orders for the year.

## FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The Facilities Department is responsible for the maintenance of all County owned buildings and their adjacent areas. This department constructs new buildings and renovates old buildings as needed to accommodate the occupants. In-house staff is utilized for maintenance, as well as all phases of construction. This reduces the need for outside contractors which benefits the County monetarily.

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## PUBLIC WORKS

Accomplishments for 06/07:

- Construction on the Facilities Management Office
- Construction of a Communications Building & Tower
- Construction on the Veterans Office
- Renovations at Annex II
- Phase two of the HVAC system at the Annex II
- New card swipe lock in the Court House

### UTILITY DEPARTMENT

This year, the Hardee County Utility Department increased customer base water use revenues 65% and wastewater revenues 72% from the previous year. This

Mission Statement of the Facilities Department for Hardee County:

It is our goal to provide a clean, safe, and comfortable environment for all County staff as well as the general public that visit our facilities and recreational areas. It is our desire to meet and exceed the needs and expectations of a continually growing and changing community.



# PUBLIC WORKS

The Hardee County Utility Department (HCUD) is responsible for all facets of management and operation of the County owned water and wastewater service area treatment plants. HCUD also ensures systems function continuously and efficiently in compliance with regulatory safety and environmental standards .

The Department also performs related customer relations, research, billing, project management and policy roles in support of County economic development and other comprehensive planning goals and objectives.

was accomplished through continued utility service activities within the SFCC Adjunct Facility, Best Western Heritage Inn & Suites, Crystal Lake Village, FINR, the new K-8 schools complex and the Hardee County Commerce Park.

Also, planning was initiated to provide support and future service to anticipated

customers such as, Country Walk Apartments, Pine Cone/Orange Blossom/Wagon Wheel MH & RV Parks, the FINR expansion, and other proposed developments.

To aid in this expansion, the Utility Department received a state grant of \$750,000 for ongoing County wastewater plant expansion and service/line extensions.

Additionally, a water line refurbishment/replacement project in the southern unincorporated area of Bowling Green was completed ahead of schedule and below bid cost.

With the commencement of construction on the Wauchula Hills WasteWater Treatment Plant Expansion Project, the Utility Department's ability to meet the needs of Hardee County's growing population will



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## PUBLIC WORKS

be increasing in the very near future!

In addition to all these projects, the construction of utility collections and distribution systems are being planned for Wauchula Hills Sub Division. Phase I has been initiated.

### LANDFILL



During the past fiscal year, the landfill section of the Solid Waste Department finished a major construction project. In March 2007 the Phase II of the Section I 5-acre landfill expansion was completed. This has been in progress since August 2005 and was completed for \$2,909,021.62.

There are two ways to bury trash:

- **Dump** - an open hole in the ground where trash is buried and that has various animals (rats, mice, birds) swarming around. (This is most people's idea of a landfill!)
- **Landfill** - carefully designed structure built into or on top of the ground in which trash is isolated from the surrounding environment (groundwater, air, rain). This isolation is accomplished with a bottom liner and daily covering of soil.

# PUBLIC WORKS

The Landfill has managed several programs for Hardee County residents. Among these is the Household Hazardous Waste collection held quarterly.

This program allowed the Landfill to properly divert and recycle or dispose of 17.20 tons of hazardous materials over the past fiscal year. The cost of the collections \$16,664.41.

Other responsibilities for the Landfill included site improvements mandated by the state Department of Environmental Protection. These improvements included trenching in new leachate lines on the North and East side of the landfill, placement of survey markers, and an aerial topography was performed to determine the remaining capacity in the Class I Landfill.

The Landfill staff processed 22,912.26 tons of waste into the following categories:

Class I Disposal:	20,862.91 tons
Wood and Yard:	2,049.35 tons

The collection of tipping fees, which includes daily accounting of cash customers, monthly invoicing of deposit account customers and collections is the responsibility of the landfill staff. Total tipping fees collected for 06/07 were \$691,501.78. Further, the Solid Waste staff applied for and managed the Small County Consolidated Grant awarded by the State. Revenues for this grant in 2006/2007 were \$191,176.

**Did you know?  
The Wauchula Hills Water  
and Sewer expansion  
project is the County's first  
endeavor to provide public  
utilities to individual homes**

The entire department addressed and effectively resolved complaints received from unincorporated Hardee County residents who receive garbage pickup. Special pick-up

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## PUBLIC WORKS

requests from unincorporated residents were also taken and forwarded to Public Works by our office. The Solid Waste Department is also responsible for the issuance of private road identification cards.

Other activities at the Solid Waste Department:

- 442 tons of C&D materials were diverted to Waste Corporation at the cost of \$22,365.50.
- Polk County landfill took 56.92 tons of waste tires at the cost of \$5,130.00.

## RECYCLING

Over the past fiscal year, the Recycling section of the Solid Waste Department was responsible for recycling the following:

Scrap Metal:	744.05 tons
Lead Acid Batteries:	8.75 tons
Cardboard:	4.65 tons
News Print:	17.68 tons
E-Scrap:	34.86 tons
Tires:	214.87 tons
Propane Tanks:	2.50 tons

The recycling staff is responsible for finding markets for recyclables. A total of

**Did you know?**  
**The Landfill also provides a safe method for the home users of sharps to dispose of their needles. This greatly reduces the risk to sanitation workers and the solid waste staff from accidental exposure to infectious diseases.**

The number of landfills has declined from about 20,000 in the early 1970's to about 2,900 due mostly to stiffer EPA regulations and increased financial requirements.

# PUBLIC WORKS

The typical composition for landfill gas is approximately 50% Methane and 50% Carbon Dioxide. Some places have even begun using the methane produced as a source of electricity!

\$28,725.93 was collected by the Recycling Department for these goods.

The Recycling section also manages a variety of Solid Waste contracts including Consolidated Resource Recovery for the processing of wood and yard debris. The effort of resource recovery is aided by the Hardee Correctional Institution who provide a trained corrections officer and a seven-inmate work squad to perform this task.

The Solid Waste Department continues to promote the value of all recycling programs available, both public and private. The department's reduction of recycling tonnages is partially due to the expansion that is currently under construction at the landfill.



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## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

For the fiscal year 2006/2007, the Planning and Development Department processed requests for Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments, “Comp Plan” Future Land Use Map Amendments, Major Special Exceptions, Exceptions to Policy L1.15 of the “Comp Plan” and Temporary Special Use Permits. Planning also reviewed Site Development Plan approvals and Rezones in addition to minor and major subdivision plats.

Site Development Plans were approved for:

- Country Walk Ltd on Maxwell Road
- A retail rental center for New Smyrna Beach Acquisitions in Wauchula Square
- A retail rental center for Florida Sales/Rentals in Cobb Industrial Park
- A produce distribution center for VegKing of Florida on Steve Roberts Special
- Florida’s First Assembly of God for an educational building
- FINR for a swimming pool/horse barn complex



# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- First Christian Church for the addition of a youth building



- The development of a church on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue
- Wagon Wheel/Torrey Oaks Golf and RV Resort for the redesign of the lots and the addition of amenities to the Park
- David Conerly for expansion of a tank and welding operation on Vandolah Road

The Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act - also known as Florida's Growth Management Act - requires all of Florida's 67 counties and 410 municipalities to adopt Local Government Comprehensive Plans that guide future growth and development.

Comprehensive plans contain chapters or "elements" that address future land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, coastal management, conservation, recreation and open space, intergovernmental coordination, and capital improvements.

- FING III Inc. on Johns Rd for the expansion of the WINNR Ranch
- The development of single-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings for Ridge Estates on Torrey Road

The Planning and Development Department has also played a role in the growth of Hardee Commerce Park by welcoming approved Site Development Plans for tile distribution centers for Milano Tile and Allyndeb Tile and a distribution center for Pacer Marine.

An amendment to the approved Site Development Plan was approved for the Center for Chimpanzee and Orangutan Conservation for additional lands to be added to the Center.

One of the major services the Planning and

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## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Development Department provides to the general citizenry is zoning determination/information data sheets. Those sheets answer specific questions and cite regulations from the Unified Land Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan to help inquirers know what can be done with a parcel of land before development plans are finalized.

Along with the zoning answers, information about floodplain areas and identified wetlands areas are provided. All applications for development permits for the unincorporated areas of Hardee County are routed through the Planning and Development Department to ensure the parcels are conforming and are entitled to development permits.

### BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Building and Code Enforcement Department must ensure that all structures are constructed according to adopted codes and ordinances that are designed to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of County citizens.



Accomplishments include:

- Review of more than 51 million dollars worth of new construction
- Issued 1,090 permits for new

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Mining is an integral part of



Hardee County's economy. While other counties are fighting against phosphate mining, Hardee County has chosen to work with the mining companies to keep jobs in our community.

construction

- Conducted 3,574 inspections
- Attended 38 court cases related to code violations
- Issued 26 Code Enforcement Citations
- Conducted approximately 2,880 Code Enforcement Inspections

## MINING DEPARTMENT

- Staff has conducted monthly water quality sampling at each designated sampling area and reviewed and responded to each monthly water quality report
- The Mining Department is nearing completion of the review process for the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) application from Mosaic for the South Fort Meade Mine Extension (The project is approximately 10,885 acres)
- The Mining Department has also reviewed the Master Mining and Reclamation Plan submitted by Mosaic for the South Fort Meade Extension
- Staff has conducted numerous field surveys and assisted the Industry in their efforts to produce applications for Mosaic's South Fort Meade Extension and CF's South Pasture Extension
- Staff has continued to assure compliance with the HCMO and the Hardee County Comprehensive Plan

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Community Development (OCD) Offers Continuous Dedication to our community through coordinating, monitoring, and maintaining a centralized database of all grants and grant projects for the County. OCD also assists the Departments and Grant Consultants in the acquisition, implementation, and administration of grant programs.

Community Development's mission is to provide an integrated system of resources, services and opportunities to help people improve their lives, the lives of others, neighborhoods and the total community.

#### Departmental Highlights:

- Processed 345 applications for housing assistance
- Expended nearly \$2.3 million for repairs and alterations in order to improve the health, safety and well being of elderly, disabled and low-income families
- Expended over \$700,000 in assisting local families with fulfilling their dream of becoming first-time homeowners

OCD's largest single-family project was successfully completed this year. This family of ten was living in the remains of a hurricane-ravaged two bedroom, one bath home. It took many months of hard work from OCD staff to make this project a reality. Through perseverance of seeking donated materials, donated labor and collaborating to combine three funding sources; together with the

family's personal loan, their replacement home became a reality. Not only did this project provide a safe homestead, it provided hope for a promising future!



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Expended over \$25,000 in rental assistance.

Implemented and administered two health care grants in collaboration with the Health Care Task Force and the Primary Care Network to assist low-income and under-insured citizens totaling over \$231,000



Continued grant management and construction oversight of the Wauchula Hills wastewater improvement project that will provide water and sewer services to more than 80 families.

Continued grant management of Hardee Lakes and Hardee Park development grants, as well as successfully completing the Hardee Trails Program grant.

Implemented an aggressive program to collect on defaulted liens to ensure continuity of the housing rehab program, and the current year had a return of over \$155,000

***Did you know:***  
Community Development offers several facets of housing counseling, including budget and foreclosure prevention to all citizens at no charge

Provided structural modifications to enhance accessibility for elderly and physically impaired occupants.

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### EXTENSION OFFICE

The Hardee County Extension Office also offers educational services for residents. It is the goal of the Hardee County Extension Office to:

- Provide research based information to local livestock producers to maintain and enhance their profitability
- Provide nutrition education programs to individuals and families from pre-school to adults in Hardee County in order to improve health throughout the life cycle
- Provide research based information to reduce risky behaviors by teens in Hardee County in order to reduce teen pregnancy rates and substance abuse among children and youth
- Recruit additional adult volunteers in order to provide greater learning opportunities in all areas of 4-H
- Initiate new 4-H clubs to meet the needs of urban youth in Hardee County in order to provide additional quality youth programs for children and youth

The Extension Office has gone a long way in reaching its goals.

The Hardee County Cooperative Extension Service provides research based educational information and services in the areas of agriculture, family & consumer sciences and 4-H youth without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicapping conditions or national origin.



# COMMUNITY SERVICES



These are just a few of their accomplishments for the year:

- Conducted local Beef Cattle Short Course, Artificial Insemination School, Goat Field Day, Grazing Tours, Winter Supplementation Program and Weed Field Day for livestock producers in Hardee County

- Taught nutrition classes to preschool teachers using the Color Me Healthy train-the-trainer curriculum

Visit

***Did you know?***  
**4-H enrollment increased by 23%  
in 2006/2007 to more than 400  
members**

- Conducted annual six-week "Back to Basics" summer day camp for children and youth in Hardee County

[hardee.ifas.ufl.edu](http://hardee.ifas.ufl.edu)  
to learn more about the Hardee  
County Extension Office

- Representing Extension, taught nutrition and 4-H curriculum to all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students (over 400) in Hardee County at annual Ag-Fest sponsored by Farm Bureau

## LIBRARY

An important part of County Government is to provide services at a local level that are tailored to fit the unique needs of the community. Hardee County strives to provide services that benefit every citizen

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES

in a cost efficient manner without losing the personal touch that makes this community so special.

On January 2, 2007 the Hardee County Public Library had its grand reopening after being severely damaged by Hurricane Charley in August of 2004. The newly refurbished 15,648 square foot library has been restored better than ever to serve the growing community.

The library provides quality customer service to the public including increased access to information, collection development and resource sharing. The county participates in an interlocal agreement with the Heartland Library Cooperative to provide resources to county residence from a shared database.

State Aid to Libraries grant awarded the library \$79,695 for 2006-2007. The Florida State Library also funded \$10,000 to the library for the "Reading with Pride and Power" project. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation granted to the library 10 new public access internet computers.

The library has a total collection of over 62,200 items which include books, videos, and DVDs for customers of all ages.

***Did you know?***  
**From January 2 through  
September 30, 2007 the  
library had 25,435  
visitors.**

Join the 13,326 registered library card users by getting yours today!

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

You are now able to use many of our library's services from the comfort of your own home! The Heartland Library Cooperative web site ([www.myhlc.org](http://www.myhlc.org)) allows patrons to access the library from home to review their accounts, reserve new materials, download audio books, and provides free access to Florida Electronic Library database on the internet.

675 children participated in summer programs at the library. During 2006-2007 the library had 45 programs with a total of 1,540 children participating.

## PARKS & RECREATION

It is the responsibility of the Facilities Department to not only oversee the maintenance of county owned buildings, but parks as well.

The Director of Facilities, 33 full time employees and 3 part-time employees are there to see to it that not only does the county staff have adequate facilities, but that all of our parks remain beautiful and welcoming attractions.

One of Hardee County's biggest attractions is Pioneer Park Days. Held every year during the first weekend in March, this event blends the roar of old engines with the lively sounds of live entertainment.



The 39th annual celebration held this past March continued this event's history of success. These accomplishments include:

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Collection of \$45,736 in ticket sales at the gate
- Total of exhibits exceeded 400, coming as far as Canada for the event
- Sold out 491 vendor spaces
- A new attraction was the Florida Frontiersman, demonstrating frontier and pioneer living

In addition to Pioneer Park Days, Hardee County has seen an increasing number of events held at its other parks. In the newly opened Hardee Lakes Park, events such as privately sponsored fishing tournaments have become regional attractions.

The Facilities Department staff is responsible for major improvement to Hardee Lakes Park have made such events possible. Just in the past year, the Department has completed the following in our local parks:

- Created 8 miles of horse trails, 5 miles ADA accessible trails and hiking trails, and 5 miles of bike trails at Hardee Lakes Park
- Remodeled restrooms at Pioneer Park

With a total of 44 animals, the staff at the Animal Refuge has their hands full, but their hard work is evident in their dedication. This past year the Animal Refuge achieved 100% compliance on their USDA annual inspection report!



# COMMUNITY SERVICES

Hardee County has always been a place where nature lovers can come and enjoy the peace and purity of Old Florida.

Come and visit these Hardee County natural attractions and see what Hardee County has to offer:

**PIONEER PARK**  
Corner of SR 64 & Hwy 17 , Zolfo Springs

**HARDEE LAKES PARK**  
Ollie Roberts Road, Wauchula

**HARDEE PARK**  
Doyle Carlton Road, Wauchula

**ANIMAL REFUGE**  
Located within Pioneer Park, Zolfo Springs

- Prepared for the 1,200 guests of Nature Fest held at Hardee Lakes Park
- Built fishing piers and a floating dock at Hardee Lakes Park
- Prepared Pioneer Park for Pioneer Park Days, the 4th of July celebration festivities, and the Heartland Dog Show

But you do not have to visit a park during an event to have a great time, there are things to see and do year-round.

The Animal Refuge, located in Pioneer Park, offers a great way to see an abundance of wildlife all in one place. Their recent additions include:

- Four Gray Foxes
- One Peacock
- Six Alligators
- Two African Spurred Tortoises
- Six White-Tail Fawns
- Glass viewing area at the otter exhibit

## SOIL CONSERVATION

The Hardee SWCD, voted in by Hardee County as authorized by Chapter 617.05, has worked in cooperation with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in assisting farmers and ranchers in Hardee County.

For 2007, the Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District assisted in the procurement of \$641,632.73 of Federally-

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES

funded conservation assistance for approximately 2,119 acres.

This department provided support to the Mobile Irrigation Lab thereby providing assistance to 25 local producers in addition to providing assistance to 15 individuals in obtaining SWFWMD permits. In addition, technical information was provided to approximately 325 individuals.

The District also provides assistance to government and private landowners on environmental subject such as wetlands, endangered and threatened species, nutrient and pest management, soils, and technical help in managing the natural sources.

### HUMAN SERVICES

The Hardee County Board of County Commissioners participates in allocating county funds to various non-profit organizations that are established within the county. These organizations are thought to be a great benefit to the residents and they help to improve the physical and mental state of needy residents. They also provide many needed elderly services as well as promoting the economic strength and community environment that is necessary for a



The

Hardee SWCD, voted in by Hardee County as authorized by Chapter 617.05, has worked in cooperation with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in assisting farmers and ranchers in Hardee County. The district has approximately 1,142 cooperators.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

Visit the Federal Citizens' Information Center @ <http://pueblo.gsa.gov/> or call 1-800-FED-INFO for consumer information and answers to questions regarding government services.

healthy community.

The following non-profit organizations received funding from the county:

- Hardee County Health Department
- Health Care Task Force
- Peace River Center
- Hope of Hardee
- Resthaven
- HARC (Hardee Association for Retarded Citizens)
- Tri-County Addictions
- ATC Intelitran

Human Services also includes funding that is mandated by the state for indigent health care, Medicaid supplements, and indigent burials.

## VETERANS SERVICES

It is the role of the Veterans Services Office to assist veterans and their dependents in filing for all benefits due them. This includes:

- Informing more than 2,000 Hardee County citizens and/or their dependents of their benefits
- Assisting those entitled to benefits by filing claims accurately and efficiently with the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Acting as the advocate to the veterans/dependants for claims and counseling

***Did you know?***  
**According to the 2000 Census, 12% of Hardee County's adults are veterans**

# ANNUAL REPORT

2006-2007

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Assistance in dealing with VA or VA medical facilities and other federal and state agencies
- Private home visits for those who cannot travel to the Veterans Services Office
- Visiting nursing homes throughout the county as requested
- Assist with burial claims and survivor benefits when eligible

It is through this department and the awareness and support of the community that those who have served their country, many with the physical and psychological wounds of war, are able to receive assistance.

### PROBATION

This department provides supervision services to the court system for misdemeanor cases in Hardee County. These services are provided in such a manner as to ensure compliance with court ordered obligations.

During 2006/2007 there were 277 new probation cases taken, including 61 community service only cases.



Probation services are provided to ensure probationers assistance in living a worthwhile life style, thereby enabling them to stay in society and contribute, without putting extra burdens on the jail and welfare system.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

\$161,118.95

That is the total that was generated for Hardee County through collections of probation fees, assistance in collections for Clerk's Office, and the community service provided to Hardee County Departments!

120 warrants were issued on non-compliers for failure to cooperate and abide by instructions.

83 warrant cases were apprehended and probation status revoked. Offenders were usually given appropriate jail sentences.

3,451 hours of community service were accomplished by probationers at the Hardee County Road Department and Pioneer Park.

\$22,634.49 is the benefit to Hardee County of the hours contributed, figured at minimum wage.

\$76,485.00 in probation fees were collected during this time. The large increase in fees collected from past years is due to less cases being transferred out, and less cases being early termed.



\$61,999.46 is the amount that was collected for the Clerk's Office in court ordered obligations, mostly fines.

\$5,692.34 is the amount that was collected and forwarded to victims of crimes for restitution.

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## CONSTITUTIONAL



### **Sheriff Loran Cogburn**

The Hardee County Sheriff's Office is the law enforcement branch of the County government. One of the primary objectives of the Sheriff's Office is to provide a safe, secure community environment for all residents. The Sheriff's Office serves the community by protecting life and property, preserving peace and order, preventing and detecting crime, managing the county jail, enforcing all laws and ordinances, and promoting the safe, efficient use of the County's streets and highways.

### **Zee Smith, Tax Collector**

The Tax Collector is responsible for the collection of ad valorem taxes and other taxes set at the local level, including those by special levying districts, state agencies, and county commissions. The Tax Collector also acts as an agent of several state departments, including the



Department of Revenue, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and the Fresh Water Fish Commission.



### **Kathy Crawford, Property Appraiser**

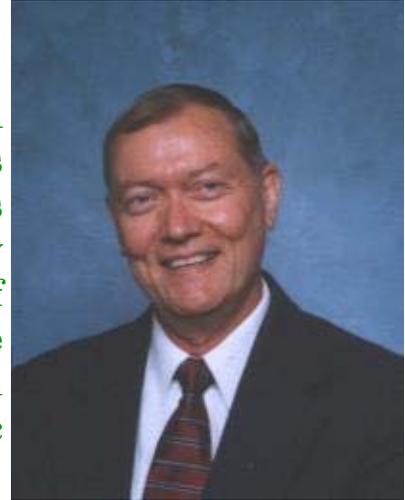
The mission of the Property Appraiser is to fairly and equitably discover, list, and value all real and tangible personal property for the purpose of creating the annual ad valorem tax

# OFFICERS

roll in accordance with applicable Florida Statutes. The Property Appraiser is a constitutional officer elected every four years by the citizens of Hardee County.

## **Hugh Bradley, Clerk of the Court**

The Clerk of the Courts serves as an elected public trustee, providing a system of “checks and balances” at the county level which has proven to serve the public well. Established by Florida Constitution, the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court is responsible to serve the citizens of the County as custodian of all County funds and guardian of the public records.



## **Jeff Ussery, Supervisor of Elections**

It is the mission of the Supervisor of Elections office and all who work within it to serve the people of Hardee County and represent them with pride throughout the State of Florida and this great nation in which we live. Their open door policy ensures that everyone from the person passing through our community seeking directions, the elector in need of a replacement voter information card, the first time registrant wishing to cast their first vote, to the political candidate or parties in need of information, receives their request in a timely and courteous manner.

# COUNTY DIRECTORY

<b>Animal Control</b> 773-2320	<b>Emergency Management</b> 773-6373	<b>Pioneer Park</b> 735-0330
<b>Animal Refuge</b> 735-9531	<b>Facilities Management</b> 773-3419	<b>Planning &amp; Development</b> 767-1964
<b>Building &amp; Code Enforcement</b> 773-3236	<b>Fire Control &amp; EMS</b> 773-4362	<b>Property Appraiser</b> 773-2196
<b>Central Dispatch</b> 773-4144	<b>Guardian Ad Litem</b> 773-2505	<b>Public Defender</b> 773-6758
<b>Civic Center</b> 773-6698	<b>Hardee Lakes Park</b> 781-2594	<b>Purchasing</b> 773-5014
<b>Clerk of the Court</b> 773-4174	<b>Health Department</b> 773-4161	<b>Road &amp; Bridge</b> 773-3272
<b>Community Development</b> 773-6349	<b>Human Resources</b> 773-2161	<b>Sheriff</b> 773-0304
<b>County Extension</b> 773-2164	<b>Mining</b> 773-0136	<b>Soil Conservation</b> 773-9644
<b>County Manager/BOCC</b> 773-9430	<b>Information Technology</b> 767-9655	<b>State Attorney</b> 773-6613
<b>County Probation</b> 773-9323	<b>Landfill</b> 773-5089	<b>State Probation</b> 773-4777
<b>Courthouse Security</b> 773-0385	<b>Library</b> 773-6438	<b>Supervisor of Elections</b> 773-6061
<b>Cracker Trail Museum</b> 735-0119	<b>Maintenance Shop</b> 773-6430	<b>Tax Collector</b> 773-9144
<b>E911</b> 773-0222	<b>Management &amp; Budget</b> 773-3199	<b>Utilities</b> 781-4431

